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occurred when Owen was passing out of middle age. It is no wonder that he looked at the matter conservatively. In the early days of the theory it was not so clear as now that all evolution is not Darwinism. Many evolutionists would now hesitate to say that he was wrong. The tendency of earlier and cruder evolution was to throw utterly aside all respect for such works as that on the "Archetype." Indeed, the extravagances of visionaries like Oken had paved the way for a reaction. Professor Owen was essentially a devout man. He saw in nature plan and law, and through these the Creator. He wrote as follows in the Preface to his *Comparative Anatomy*: "In the second aim, the parts and organs, severally the subjects of these chapters, are exemplified by instances selected with a view to guide or help to the power of apprehending the unity which underlies the diversity of animal structures; to show in these structures the evidence of a predetermining Will, producing them in reference to a final purpose; and to indicate the direction and degrees in which organization, in subserving such Will, rises from the general to the particular." In spite of his singleness of purpose Owen's strong point was neither in controversy nor in philosophy. He excelled in his powers of observation and in his capacity for work. Theories and systems may rise and fall, but his descriptions of living and extinct forms may remain the standard of instruction for generations.

1893.

THOMAS DWIGHT.

## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON, a Foreign Honorary Member of the Academy in Class III., Section 4, since 1876, died at Aldworth in Surrey on the 6th of October, 1892.

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby Rectory in Lincolnshire on the 6th of August, 1809, the son of the Reverend George Clayton Tennyson. He early showed a love of poetry, and when little more than eighteen years old found a publisher for a volume of poems written in connection with his brother. This poetic flight was promptly followed by others, including, in 1829, a college prize poem on the subject of Timbuctoo. These early poems are smooth and pleasant, good-boyish verses, far better than most productions of the kind.

In 1830 appeared "Poems, chiefly Lyrical," — a volume con-

taining, among other pieces, "Claribel," "Mariana," "The Deserted House," and "The Sleeping Beauty"; the last of these was afterwards expanded. In the same year Tennyson and his friend Arthur Hallam made an expedition into Spain, carrying money and letters written in invisible ink to some Spanish rebels, with whom they were in sympathy. In 1832 another volume was published, made up, like its predecessor, of short poems, among which were "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "Enone," "The May Queen," and "The Lotos-Eaters." By these pieces Tennyson established his position as a poet. Indeed, he hardly rose higher in lyric sweetness at any later time than he did in the exquisite songs "It is the miller's daughter," and "Love that hath us in the net."

On the 15th of September, 1833, Arthur Hallam died at Vienna. The grief of the poet for the loss of his friend was very great, and was aggravated by the fact that Hallam was to have married Tennyson's sister. Such sorrows might be thought too sacred to be laid open to the world by any biographer; and Tennyson has pronounced

"Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest!"

But he has himself chosen to impart to the public a share in this grief; he has embalmed it in noble verse; and his verse, unlike his ashes, is the property of the world. At the time of its occurrence the blow seems to have stunned him. For nearly nine years he published little; only a few pieces in fugitive publications. In 1842, however, a new edition of his poems appeared in two volumes, including all those poems in the previous editions which he cared to retain, and adding many new ones, among which were "Locksley Hall," "St. Simeon Stylites," "Lady Clare," "The Two Voices," "The Lord of Burleigh," "Sir Galahad," and "Break, break, break."

Five years later came "The Princess," but without its lyrics, which were published with the third edition of the poem in 1850. This latter year was one of great importance in Tennyson's life. It is marked by the publication of "In Memoriam," by his marriage, and by his appointment as poet laureate. The fine "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" appeared in 1852, to be followed, in 1854, by "The Charge of the Light Brigade," a thousand copies of which were printed on a broad-

side, and distributed to the soldiers before Sebastopol. In 1855 "Maud" was published. In 1859 the first collection of "Idylls of the King" was brought out, — "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere." They had been preceded, many years earlier, by the "Morte d'Arthur," and were followed after an interval of ten years by "The Coming of Arthur," "The Holy Grail," and "Pelleas and Ettare"; then by "The Last Tournament"; and finally, in 1885, by "Balin and Balan." All the Idylls have been arranged to form a sequence.

It was not until 1876, when the poet was in his sixty-seventh year, that his first tragedy, "Queen Mary," was presented. It was followed at intervals by other dramas. In 1880, a volume of "Ballads" appeared, including "The Defence of Lucknow," "The Voyage of Maeldune," and many other poems.

In 1884 Tennyson was made a peer, with the title of Baron Aldworth and Farringford. The honor was well bestowed. There have been British poets as great as this one whose elevation to the peerage would have been incongruous: imagine a Lord Wordsworth, or a Lord Burns. But Tennyson, throughout his writings, moves with a stately dignity and grace. His verse is sonorous and refined. In spite of a curious fondness for expressing despair, he never tears a passion to tatters. His robes shine with a score of colors; they are set with a hundred jewels; they flow in liquid lines, and never get out of order. He seldom attempts to wear homespun, and when he does try it on, it does not fit him. Such a poet is well suited to take his recognized place in a great aristocracy.

The work of Tennyson divides itself naturally into periods and into forms. The style and substance, nearly uniform throughout, run readily into various moulds. That style, as I have said, is dignified, lofty, and sonorous. From these qualities it seldom departs and never to its advantage. Like many essentially dignified men, Alfred Tennyson liked to be playful; but his playfulness seldom raises a smile to the lips of his readers. When he is pathetic, we sorrow with him; when he is inclined to jest, we generally wish he would refrain. An exception may perhaps be made in favor of some of the pieces in dialect, where the humor is of the very quietest description. Occasionally, and most in the earlier poems, there are great lapses from good taste; but in his better pieces this is very rare, and, after all, it is only good taste, and not morals or feelings, that suffer. Yet

the shock may be great. The reader is interested; he is moved; the force of poetry has mastered him; every pore of his mind is open to the magic sunlight. Suddenly he is struck by a chilling blast which raises the mental goose-flesh. I will give but one instance of this, for the fault, as I have said, is not common in Tennyson's best pieces; but it is too characteristic to pass entirely unnoticed. Let the reader give up his mind to the first ten lines of the following quotation from the "The Miller's Daughter":

"But when at last I dared to speak,  
 The lanes, you know, were white with may,  
 Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
 Flashed like the coming of the day;  
 And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,  
 You would, and would not, little one!  
 Although I pleaded tenderly,  
 And you and I were all alone.

"And slowly was my mother brought  
 To yield consent to my desire:  
*She wished me happy, but she thought  
 I might have looked a little higher."*

But such accidents as this are of rare occurrence. Generally the poem will flow on, with an even cadence to the ear and a well ordered sequence to the mind, rising grandly, sinking gracefully, best when most serious and tender.

The substance of the poems varies more than the style. It is now religious or philosophical, now patriotic; again it is of love or of nature. It is always pure, generally hopeful and believing.

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds,"

writes Tennyson; and his sympathies are chiefly reserved for those doubts which are full of faith. The son of a clergyman, and born in 1809, — at the height of the reaction against the incredulity of the eighteenth century, — he was a convinced and unwavering Christian; liberal with the liberality of a large mind and especially with the charity of a loving heart; faithful to the faith of his childhood. He is full of hope, too. We feel that his deepest despair is an affair of temper and digestion, that the strong heart of the man and his inmost convictions are

healthy and sunny. In his worst moods he never sneers — but at a mob, or a Frenchman. His patriotism is intense and unquestioning. Had we to judge from the internal evidence of his poems, we might believe that he had never strayed from English ground. His imagination has never travelled elsewhere, save for those little excursions with the classic muse which the Cambridge or Oxford man absolutely owes to his schoolmasters. If, in reading him, we are startled by an echo of Dante, or even of Walt Whitman, it is but a faint and distant echo, soon dying away. In England Tennyson was at home, and none of her sons have loved her more nobly. Every flower of the English field, every cloud of the English sky, had its word for him. And like his patriotism is his purity of heart,— a positive quality, elevating the whole nature of the man, the whole work of the poet.

There are three distinctly marked periods in Tennyson's poetical life. The first includes his early poems, and ends with the two volumes issued in 1842, at the close of the long time of comparative silence that followed the death of Arthur Hallam. The poetry of this period is chiefly lyrical, consisting of ballads with a slight thread of narrative running through them, like "The Lady of Shalott," "Ænone," "The May Queen," or "A Dream of Fair Women"; or of songs entirely without story, such as "It is the miller's daughter." Occasionally in this period a hint was given of the forms which the poet's genius was to take in the future. Thus the "Morte d'Arthur" gives promise of the "Idylls"; "The Two Voices" is a prelude to "In Memoriam." The poetry of this earlier part of the poet's life is often exquisite; the lyrics are nearly, if not quite, as good as his best. Indeed, "Love that hath us in the net," and "Break, break, break," are among the very best things in that line that he ever accomplished, — among the sweetest songs in the English language. Yet if Alfred Tennyson had died in 1845, he would not have ranked among the greatest of British poets. His place would have been with Campbell and not with Scott, with Moore and not with Byron. He was not destined to leap, like Keats and Shelley, to the first rank while under thirty. It was in the second period of his life, in the strength of his manhood, that Tennyson achieved the height of his greatness. In the twelve years from 1847 to 1859 appeared "The Princess" and its lyrics, "In Memoriam," and the first collection of

Idylls; and these are the most characteristic and the finest of his poems. It is on them that his reputation must finally rest.

In 1859 Tennyson was fifty years old. He had become a thorough master of his art. Many of his best qualities remained to him; he was still the maker of graceful and sonorous verse, but he was not destined to add to his already towering reputation. In his later years he worked faithfully and successfully in his old forms, and tried a new one, the dramatic. He retained much of the vigor and sweetness of his mind; he gave to the English-speaking world much good poetry, and with it very little that his warmest admirers should regret.

Of the forms of poetry, that to which Tennyson adhered through life was the lyrical, with a touch of narrative,—from “Mariana in the Moated Grange,” at the beginning, to “Charity,” at the end of his works. In this line he was very successful, but it is a line which hardly admits the highest poetry. We are all fond of “The May Queen,” and “Lady Clare,” and “The Beggar Maid,” — men of fifty know them by heart; but we do not place them beside “Lycidas,” or Portia’s speech in court, or Wordsworth’s sonnets, or the best passages of “In Memoriam.” Yet we are grateful to the poet who gives us so much pure enjoyment. The poems written officially, as laureate, often belong to this category. They are strong and stirring, almost the best that has been done in that manner. The “Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington” is the most poetical, but is too long to catch the popular ear. The “Welcome” to the Princess of Wales on her marriage contains lines not easily forgotten:—

“Sea-kings’ daughter from over the sea, Alexandra!  
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee, Alexandra!”

“The Charge of the Light Brigade” thunders through the head, and will hold a place in the British memory but little below Campbell’s “Mariners of England” and Burns’s “Scots wha hae.”

There is another style of lyric in which Tennyson has surpassed his achievement either in narrative or in official song. The poems written in this style are purely lyrical, appealing to no extraneous emotion, seeking their interest neither in a story, nor in a description of scenery, nor in a mood of patriotic

emotion. There are not a dozen of them of the best class in all his works, in spite of the attempts of the poet to add to their number; and, with perhaps two exceptions, they belong to the period of his greatest poetic power. On them his fame as a great lyric poet will chiefly rest. These poems are "Love that hath us in the net," and perhaps, "It is the miller's daughter," written long before the others, "Break, break, break," first published in 1842, and five or six songs in "The Princess." Let us, for the sake of comparison, recall a lyric poem of either category, and, first, one deriving a part of its interest from narration and description. We may choose "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere," which is perhaps less familiar than some others, although full of beautiful poetry:

"Like souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven again  
The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
In crystal vapor everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,  
And far, in forest deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gathered green  
From draughts of balmy air.

"Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
Sometimes the thristle whistled strong :  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheeled along,  
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong :  
By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

"Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.  
She seemed a part of joyous Spring:  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

"Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,



In mosses mixt with violet  
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set:  
 And fleetier now she skimmed the plains  
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
 By night to eery warblings,  
 When all the glimmering moorland rings  
 With jingling bridle-reins.

“As she fled fast thro’ sun and shade,  
 The happy winds upon her play’d,  
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid:  
 She looked so lovely, as she sway’d  
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
 A man had given all other bliss,  
 And all his worldly worth for this,  
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
 Upon her perfect lips.”

Compare with this the Lullaby from “The Princess,” which derives no interest from narrative, but appeals simply to the ear and the poetic sense:

“Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

“Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother’s breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon;  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.”

From the lyrics we pass to an even more important part of Tennyson’s work, to what our fathers might have called “Poems of Sentiment and Reflection,” to the embodiment of the poet’s social, political, and religious ideas, to his philosophy of life. Alfred Tennyson was generous in his aspirations for humanity, he was a liberal in the best sense, a devout Christian, a natural optimist. He believed in progress, with a faith never really

extinguished, although sometimes clouded, and the progress in which he believed was of the true kind. Let us listen to a few lines from "In Memoriam":

"Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

"A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

"For she is earthly of the mind,  
But wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

"I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity."

It is the soundness and sweetness of the poet's nature which make the greatness of "In Memoriam," — a dirge of inordinate length, written in a stanza which is at first a little repellent to the ear. In spite of these drawbacks, it is well to read the whole poem at a sitting, and to mark passages for future reference. For the poem has a unity of design, and carries the reader with the poet through the depths of self-contained and dignified sorrow to the clear heights of consolation which is not forgetfulness.

And as Tennyson is hopeful in matters of religious faith, so is he in things social and political. He rails at the crowd, sometimes a little unreasonably, but he trusts to the future of the race.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And through thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end."

And this faith never left our poet long. It is good to know that after the confusion of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years after" came the serenity of "Akbar's Dream," the consciousness that the light of our century is "dawn, not day."

It is not necessary to linger over "The Princess," although there are many charming lines in the poem, beside those of the

lyrics that are set in it. "The Princess" is somewhat marred by the attempt of the poet to be light; "Maud," on the other hand, which contains much exquisite poetry, is injured by its despairing theme. Tennyson loved despair as one loves a foreign country, without ever being quite at home in it. He was eminently self-commanding, and violent passion has in his mouth a literary sound which is fatal to its appearance of genuineness. Let anybody who would compare the serious optimist and the laughing pessimist read Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," or "Maud" with its artificial darkness, and then turn to the translation which Tennyson's friend Fitzgerald has made of the poem of Omar Khayyam, with its sad humor and stern questioning of Providence. It is neither "Maud" nor "The Princess" which first rises to the mind when Tennyson's longer poems are mentioned. He is perhaps best known as the writer of the "Idylls of the King."

The legends of King Arthur had long interested the poet. Among his earlier poems, "The Lady of Shalott," "Sir Galahad," and "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere" had found a place, calling on him for some of his best work. And in the "Morte d'Arthur" he had gone farther, and actually written a part of the great series which was to be one of the principal achievements of his best years. The Idylls, as we now possess them, form a continuous poem, which has for its theme the rise, the adventures, and the fall of Arthur, the mythical King of Britain, and of the knights whom he collected in his order of the Round Table. The interest and the style of the poem are wonderfully sustained, in view of the fact that an interval of more than forty years elapsed between the appearance of the earliest and that of the last written cantos. The present arrangement of the parts of the poem is not that of their composition; but the story, as completed, marches firmly and smoothly from the Dedication to Prince Albert and "The Coming of Arthur" at the beginning, to "The Passing of Arthur" and the Ode to the Queen at the close. The stately measure moves steadily along, and scenes of beauty open on every hand. We are in England, but in an England glittering with the brilliance of chivalry, and lighted by the glow of fairy-land. Here is no rush, no turmoil, no grime and sweat; wounds and death are but glorious accidents; even sin has lost its grossness. Adultery is one of the themes of the tale, yet no coarse word is spoken, no low idea suggested; the poet's imagi-

nation is so pure that nothing can be foul in its neighborhood. Tennyson hates unchastity so thoroughly and honestly that he tells of it chastely.

Is the poem as great a triumph of art as it is of morals? Yes and no. The *Idylls* are very readable, from their scenery and from their smoothness. We are glad to be in an enchanted world. As for the characters, they interest us less. The blameless Arthur never seems quite real; he is rather a bundle of good qualities than a man of flesh and blood. If we turn from him to recall another chivalrous saint, one who really walked this earth, — if Joinville tells us of his royal master, Saint Louis, — we feel that we have a true saint and a living man before us; that Joinville has really loved his hero and comrade. Did Tennyson really love King Arthur, week-days and all? Lancelot and Tristram, and the rest, are somewhat shadowy. Queen Guinevere, although often referred to, appears but little, and generally not to advantage. Enid, that patient Grizzel, charming in her courtship, hardly obtains in her persecution by her brutal husband the sympathy which she labors so hard to deserve. Vivien is a bad woman, and Tennyson could no more describe a bad woman than Fra Angelico could have painted one. Only "Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable, Elaine the lily maid of Astolat," wins us with her beauty, and melts us with her hapless love. It is to her sorrows, and to the repentance of Guinevere, and to the death of Arthur, that the poet's best powers are given. In describing these the verse is more than smooth and stately; it is poetry of a high order.

It was not until his seventh decade was well advanced that Tennyson took to writing dramas. The attempt was unfortunate. There was nothing dramatic in his genius or in his training. He was not strong in imagination of plot, in conception of character, or in invention of situations. Moreover, a bad tradition of the British stage calls for funny scenes in a tragedy, and Tennyson was never so doleful as when he wanted to be funny. The best to be expected in his tragedies was fine lines, and fine lines do occur in them from time to time, although less often than in any other of his poems.

What is to be the permanent place of Tennyson in English literature? The poet sings first to his own age, he lives with its life, he burns with its passions, he interprets it to itself, and it repays him with enthusiastic affection. Such is the feeling of

men now in middle life for Alfred Tennyson. Later generations have different problems to solve, or have to answer the old riddles propounded in new forms. Knowledge, wisdom, and poetry have to be expressed again from time to time to suit new demands. Therefore all poets (unless preserved by some fortunate accident, like Milton, the mouthpiece of a great religious party, or Burns, the especial poet of a small and distinct nation) have to go through a time of retirement. We all know that Shakespeare himself was once thought to be a simple-minded and obsolete person. The greatest of his successors could speak patronizingly of his "native wood-notes wild." As the clothes of our fathers seem to us merely ridiculous, while those of the last century appear picturesque, so the poets that delighted our grandfathers are too often foolish and contemptible in our ears, while those of the age of Elizabeth or of Charles charm us by their quaintness. We reject the affectations of Moore to delight in those of Herbert. From the period of oblivion thus created, the minor poets hardly emerge at all. A page or two in a volume of collected verses, a couple of songs in an anthology, — such are the claims to immortality of Sidney and Wither, of Lovelace and Suckling. The great poets come out with their literary baggage much reduced. From such a time of oblivion Dryden and Pope are just emerging. In its depths are Scott and Byron. To Wordsworth has fallen the singular fortune that his voice has been most clearly recognized by a generation subsequent, but not long subsequent, to his own. It may be that he will prove an exception, and that he will live and drop his *Idiot Boys*, and silly old men, and most of his *Prelude* and *Excursion*, keeping his noble sonnets and the best of his lyrics without a dormant time. But Tennyson seems likely to share the common fate, and its coming will probably not be long delayed; for he is a poet of the early part and the middle of this century, whose life was prolonged to extreme old age, but who learned nothing very new after fifty, any more than the rest of us do. What is likely to be his place when, in a future age, the lover of poetry collects on his shelves the best volumes of English verse? What will the "Abridged Works of Lord Tennyson" contain? A perfect answer to such a question cannot be given, but I think we may approach it. The volume will not be a small one. There will be in it many ballads and short pieces, some of them treating of classical subjects, like

"Tithonus" and the "Lotos-Eaters," more with their scene laid on English ground. There will be a few exquisite lyrics. There will be several selections from "In Memoriam," and a passage or two from "Maud." There will be the "Idylls of the King," a good deal abridged. Of how many great poets of old days is a larger proportion familiar to cultivated people?

What, then, is the place of Tennyson? Not with the very few giants whose names we breathe with loving awe, — Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare; but with the great English poets who have made our literature the only one to be mentioned beside the Greek, — with Chaucer and Spenser, with Dryden and Pope, with Byron and Scott and Burns and Wordsworth and Shelley. In such glorious company we may believe that Tennyson has his place.

1893.

EDWARD J. LOWELL.

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The Academy has received an accession of twenty-three Resident Fellows, eleven Associate Fellows, and seven Foreign Honorary Members.

The Roll of the Academy, corrected to date, includes the names of 191 Fellows, 95 Associate Fellows, and 73 Foreign Honorary Members.

MAY 10, 1893.